AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended): A radiation image information reading apparatus comprising:

a cassette loader for loading a plurality of cassettes each storing a stimulable phosphor panel with radiation image information recorded therein;

a reading unit for applying stimulating light to said stimulable phosphor panel and photoelectrically reading light emitted from said stimulable phosphor panel to acquire the radiation image information recorded in the stimulable phosphor panel;

an erasure unit for applying erasing light to said stimulable phosphor panel to erase remaining radiation image information from the stimulable phosphor panel;

a detector for detecting a state of a cassette;

an abnormal cassette storage unit for storing a cassette which is detected by said detector as being in an abnormal state; ~~and~~

a normal cassette storage unit which stores a cassette including a stimulable phosphor panel from which radiation image information has been read by said reading unit; and

a discharging mechanism for discharging the cassette detected as being in the abnormal state into said abnormal cassette storage unit.

2. (original): A radiation image information reading apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said detector detects a loaded state of a cassette which is loaded in said cassette loader.

3. (original): A radiation image information reading apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said detector detects a registered state of a cassette which is loaded in said cassette loader.

4. (original): A radiation image information reading apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said detector detects an ejected state of said stimulable phosphor panel stored in a cassette.

5. (original): A radiation image information reading apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said abnormal cassette storage unit is disposed in said cassette loader.

6. (original): A radiation image information reading apparatus according to claim 5, wherein said cassette loader has an inlet member for introducing a cassette into the radiation image information reading apparatus, and a wall movable from said inlet member to provide said abnormal cassette storage unit, and wherein said wall serves as said discharging mechanism, holds the cassette detected as being in the abnormal state, and moves to store the cassette into said abnormal cassette storage unit.

7. (original): A radiation image information reading apparatus according to claim 6, wherein said inlet member is disposed on an inclined bottom panel of said cassette loader, and said wall is movable downwardly from said inlet member along said inclined bottom panel, and wherein said wall moves downwardly along said inclined bottom panel together with the cassette detected as being in the abnormal state to store the cassette into said abnormal cassette storage unit.

8. (original): A radiation image information reading apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said abnormal cassette storage unit is disposed within the radiation image information reading apparatus, for storing a cassette that is detected as being in an abnormal state which is introduced from said cassette loader into the radiation image information reading apparatus and discharged by said discharging mechanism.

9. (currently amended): A radiation image information reading apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said abnormal cassette storage unit is disposed outside of the radiation image information reading apparatus independently of said cassette loader, for storing a cassette that is detected as being in an abnormal state which is introduced from said cassette loader into the radiation image information reading apparatus and discharged by said discharging mechanism.

10. (currently amended): A radiation image information reading apparatus according to claim 1, ~~further comprising:~~

wherein said ~~a~~ normal cassette storage unit ~~for storing~~ stores a cassette, which is not detected as being in an abnormal state~~, storing~~ and includes a stimulable phosphor panel from which radiation image information has been read by said reading unit and from which remaining radiation image information has been erased by said erasure unit;

wherein said discharging mechanism selects said abnormal cassette storage unit or said normal cassette storage unit depending on the state of said cassette, and discharges the cassette.

11. (original): A radiation image information reading apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said detector detects the loaded state of the cassette based on a detected state of a reflective marker disposed in a predetermined position on the cassette.

12. (original): A radiation image information reading apparatus according to claim 3, wherein said detector detects the registered state of the cassette based on identification information detected from an identification information detecting means disposed in a predetermined position on the cassette.

13. (new): A radiation image information reading apparatus comprising:

a cassette loader for loading a plurality of cassettes each storing a stimulable phosphor panel with radiation image information recorded therein;

a reading unit for applying stimulating light to said stimulable phosphor panel and photoelectrically reading light emitted from said stimulable phosphor panel to acquire the radiation image information recorded in the stimulable phosphor panel;

an erasure unit for applying erasing light to said stimulable phosphor panel to erase remaining radiation image information from the stimulable phosphor panel;

a detector for detecting a state of a cassette;

an abnormal cassette storage unit for storing a cassette which is detected by said detector as being in an abnormal state; and

a discharging mechanism for discharging the cassette detected as being in the abnormal state into said abnormal cassette storage unit,

wherein said cassette loader has an inlet member for introducing a cassette into the radiation image information reading apparatus, and a wall movable from said inlet member to provide said abnormal cassette storage unit, and wherein said wall serves as said discharging mechanism, holds the cassette detected as being in the abnormal state, and moves to store the cassette into said abnormal cassette storage unit.

14. (new): A radiation image information reading apparatus according to claim 13, wherein said inlet member is disposed on an inclined bottom panel of said cassette loader, and said wall is movable downwardly from said inlet member along said inclined bottom panel, and wherein said wall moves downwardly along said inclined bottom panel together with the cassette detected as being in the abnormal state to store the cassette into said abnormal cassette storage unit.

15. (new): A radiation image information reading apparatus comprising:

a cassette loader for loading a plurality of cassettes each storing a stimulable phosphor panel with radiation image information recorded therein;

a reading unit for applying stimulating light to said stimulable phosphor panel and photoelectrically reading light emitted from said stimulable phosphor panel to acquire the radiation image information recorded in the stimulable phosphor panel;

an erasure unit for applying erasing light to said stimulable phosphor panel to erase remaining radiation image information from the stimulable phosphor panel;

a detector for detecting a state of a cassette;

an abnormal cassette storage unit for storing a cassette which is detected by said detector as being in an abnormal state; and

a discharging mechanism for discharging the cassette detected as being in the abnormal state into said abnormal cassette storage unit,

wherein said abnormal cassette storage unit is disposed within the radiation image information reading apparatus, for storing a cassette that is detected as being in an abnormal state which is introduced from said cassette loader into the radiation image information reading apparatus and discharged by said discharging mechanism.

16. (new): A radiation image information reading apparatus comprising:

a cassette loader for loading a plurality of cassettes each storing a stimulable phosphor panel with radiation image information recorded therein;

a reading unit for applying stimulating light to said stimulable phosphor panel and photoelectrically reading light emitted from said stimulable phosphor panel to acquire the radiation image information recorded in the stimulable phosphor panel;

an erasure unit for applying erasing light to said stimulable phosphor panel to erase remaining radiation image information from the stimulable phosphor panel;

a detector for detecting a state of a cassette;

an abnormal cassette storage unit for storing a cassette which is detected by said detector as being in an abnormal state; and

a discharging mechanism for discharging the cassette detected as being in the abnormal state into said abnormal cassette storage unit,

wherein said detector detects a loaded state of a cassette which is loaded in said cassette loader, and

wherein said detector detects the loaded state of the cassette based on a detected state of a reflective marker disposed in a predetermined position on the cassette.